

**CONCURRENT RESOLUTION PROMOTING CONTINUED
ACCESS AND RECREATION ON LANDS MANAGED BY THE
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

2017 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Michael E. Noel

Senate Sponsor: David P. Hinkins

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This concurrent resolution supports access and recreation on lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management in Utah.

Highlighted Provisions:

This resolution:

- supports expanding state and local influence over motorized access and recreation on lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM);
- supports a "no net loss" policy for current and future travel planning;
- requests the BLM to provide a public review and comment period for new transportation and travel management guidance; and
- supports funding a full-time employee to work on behalf of the counties that the new travel plans affect.

Special Clauses:

None

Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor concurring therein:

WHEREAS, Utah's citizens depend on the ability to access and use federally managed lands for essential commodities and functions, ranging from timber and water to recreation and



commercial activities that provide economic benefits to the state and local communities;

WHEREAS, over the last three decades, the ability of citizens to use motorized travel for access and recreation on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) managed lands in Utah has been drastically reduced;

WHEREAS, recent BLM planning decisions cut road and trail access roughly in half, while greatly expanding areas set aside for the exclusive use of citizens who seek a nonmotorized experience;

WHEREAS, commercial use of BLM managed lands in Utah has been severely reduced;

WHEREAS, the 2008 BLM land use plan dramatically reduced lands available for oil and gas development;

WHEREAS, before 2008, 43% of the BLM Moab Field Office was limited or closed to oil and gas activity, increasing to 77% after 2008;

WHEREAS, a coalition of environmental groups is challenging land use and travel management plans for the BLM's Kanab, Moab, Monticello, Price, Richfield, and Vernal field offices;

WHEREAS, on January 13, 2017, the BLM and other litigants filed a proposed settlement in U.S. District Court for the District of Utah to settle a longstanding legal challenge to land use and travel management plans on approximately 10 million acres of BLM-administered lands in Utah;

WHEREAS, if approved by the district court and subject to other certain court actions, the settlement agreement would resolve eight years of litigation brought by a consortium of environmental groups that includes the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, the Wilderness Society, and Earthjustice;

WHEREAS, if approved, the settlement agreement would require the BLM to revise its travel management plans on approximately half of each of the BLM's Kanab, Moab, Price, Richfield, and Vernal field offices, and planning would be completed under specific guidelines mandated by the proposed settlement as well as BLM's existing and new planning rules and regulations;

WHEREAS, recently-revised BLM travel planning guidance replaces a longstanding policy of "keeping routes open unless there is a compelling reason for closure" with a new

59 policy of "closing routes unless there is a compelling reason to keep them open," and the travel
60 planning guidance requires the BLM to, yet again, inventory and manage for "Wilderness
61 Characteristics"; and

62 WHEREAS, participation in BLM travel planning is time consuming and expensive for
63 Utah's rural counties and for motorized enthusiasts who often find themselves overwhelmed by
64 the complicated and overly bureaucratic planning process:

65 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the
66 Governor concurring therein, emphasizes the need for and supports expanded state and local
67 influence over access and recreation on BLM lands in Utah.

68 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor support a "no net
69 loss" policy for any current and future travel planning. The "no net loss" policy means that, if a
70 federal land manager closes "x" miles of road or trail, then they must provide an equivalent
71 opportunity nearby. The equivalent opportunity shall consist of newly constructed or previously
72 closed routes that provide:

- 73 (1) opportunities for scenic vistas;
74 (2) challenging terrain for off-highway vehicle and mountain bike travel;
75 (3) connections to other existing trail systems or trails; and
76 (4) specific routes for off-highway vehicle singletrack (motorcycle and mountain bike),
77 ATV, UTV, and full-size 4WD opportunities.

78 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor request the Utah
79 State Office of the BLM to provide a public review and comment period for the revised Travel
80 and Management Instruction Memo (currently known as Instruction Memorandum No. UT
81 2012-066) as well as the draft comprehensive travel and transportation planning programmatic
82 agreement, which would prescribe how travel planning addresses cultural resources.

83 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor support the
84 consideration of a specific line item budget that will fund a full-time employee to work on
85 behalf of the affected counties on the new travel plans.

Legislative Review Note
Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel